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LC00993/SUB A/3
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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2013

J O I N T R E S O L U T I O N

**CREATING A SPECIAL JOINT COMMISSION TO STUDY CAPTIONING AND AUDIO
DESCRIPTIONS FOR PERSONS WHO ARE HEARING OR VISUALLY IMPAIRED IN
RHODE ISLAND COMMERCIAL AND RESIDENTIAL SETTINGS**

Introduced By: Senators Cool Rumsey, Sosnowski, Walaska, Ottiano, and Pichardo

Date Introduced: February 12, 2013

Referred To: Senate Health & Human Services

1 WHEREAS, The equal treatment of those who are deaf, hard of hearing, blind, visually
2 impaired, or otherwise disabled is an important issue; and

3 WHEREAS, According to the U.S. Census Bureau and the American Community
4 Survey, in 2011, Rhode Island had an estimated population of over 50,000 people who have
5 hearing and/or vision difficulty; and

6 WHEREAS, Only two movie theaters in Rhode Island are currently providing one
7 captioned movie; and

8 WHEREAS, The 2010 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Standards for Accessible
9 Design states: "A public accommodation shall take those steps that may be necessary to ensure
10 that no individual with a disability is excluded, denied services, segregated, or otherwise treated
11 differently than other individuals because of the absence of auxiliary aids and services"; and

12 WHEREAS, An updated ADA regulation now specifies that open or closed captioning is
13 included in the term "auxiliary aids and services"; and

14 WHEREAS, New technology, such as subtitle glasses, has the potential to enable those
15 who are deaf, hard of hearing, blind, visually impaired, or otherwise disabled to enjoy the movie
16 going experience with less hassle for themselves and other patrons; now, therefore be it

17 RESOLVED, That a special legislative commission be and the same is hereby created
18 consisting of thirteen (13) members: three (3) of whom shall be members of the Senate, not more
19 than two (2) of whom shall be from the same political party, to be appointed by the President of

1 the Senate; three (3) of whom shall be members of the House of Representatives, not more than
2 two (2) of whom shall be from the same political party, to be appointed by the Speaker of the
3 House of Representatives; one of whom shall be the Executive Director of the Rhode Island
4 Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, or his or her designee; one of whom shall be the
5 Executive Secretary of the Governor's Commission on Disabilities, or his or her designee; one of
6 whom shall be the Attorney General, or his or her designee; one of whom shall be a
7 representative of the Department of Human Services who specializes in services for the blind and
8 visually impaired; one of whom shall be a representative of the Theater Owners of New England;
9 one of whom shall be a representative from the Motion Picture Association of America; and one
10 of whom shall be a representative from a Rhode Island based telecommunications company.

11 In lieu of any appointment of a member of the legislature to a permanent advisory
12 commission, a legislative study commission, or any commission created by a General Assembly
13 resolution, the appointing authority may appoint a member of the general public to serve in lieu
14 of a legislator, provided that the majority leader or the minority leader of the political party which
15 is entitled to the appointment consents to the appointment of the member of the general public.

16 The purpose of said commission shall be to study captioning and audio descriptions in
17 residential and commercial settings in Rhode Island with respect to motion pictures for persons
18 who are deaf and hard of hearing and persons who are blind or visually impaired and other areas
19 related to the Americans with Disability Act (ADA) as deemed appropriate by the commission.

20 Forthwith upon passage of this resolution, the members of the commission shall meet at
21 the call of the Co-Chairs and organize. The President of the Senate shall select a co-chairperson
22 and the Speaker of the House of Representatives shall select a co-chairperson of the commission.

23 Vacancies in said commission shall be filled in like manner as the original appointment.

24 The membership of said commission shall receive no compensation for their services.

25 All departments and agencies of the state shall furnish such advice and information,
26 documentary and otherwise, to said commission and its agents as is deemed necessary or
27 desirable by the commission to facilitate the purposes of this resolution.

28 The Joint Committee on Legislative Services is hereby authorized and directed to provide
29 suitable quarters in the State House for said commission; and be it further

30 RESOLVED, That the commission shall report its findings and results to the General
31 Assembly on or before March 4, 2014, and said commission shall expire on July 1, 2014.

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF

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RHODE ISLAND COMMERCIAL AND RESIDENTIAL SETTINGS

1 This resolution would create a thirteen (13) member special joint commission whose
2 purpose it would be to study captioning and audio descriptions in residential and commercial
3 settings in Rhode Island with respect to motion pictures for persons who are deaf and hard of
4 hearing and for persons who are blind or visually impaired, and who would report back to the
5 General Assembly on or before March 4, 2014, and whose life would expire on July 1, 2014.

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